

# Moebius

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Volume 1

Issue 1 *Arts & The Machine*

Article 22

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1-1-2003

## Interview with Melanie Kronenmann

Kimberly Masculine

*California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo*

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### Recommended Citation

Masculine, Kimberly (2003) "Interview with Melanie Kronenmann," *Moebius*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 22.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/moebius/vol1/iss1/22>

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Melanie Kronenmann

## INTERVIEW WITH MELANIE KRONENMANN

Kimberly Masculine

### *How Technology Changed Art*

In a society increasingly dominated by technology, it was only a matter of time before people began experimenting with its relationship to art. Melanie Kronenmann has seen the convergence first hand. “The computer is a tool, just like a paintbrush, pen, pencil, or a piece of charcoal,” says the graphic communication instructor, pointing out that technology has led to the newer genre of digital art. We have added the form of digital art to painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography.


Students in her desktop publishing class learn from her experience and practical knowledge of the field. “I began drawing and found my love of art at a very young age,” Kronenmann says. She learned manual newsprint production in elementary school and ran a news program in junior high. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a studio art degree and studied digital arts at the Art Center in Pasadena and at Irvine Valley College. She has worked as a custom area rug designer where she first started out painting the rug designs by hand. She then implemented computer design programs to help make the process of rug design quicker. Technology helped to make repetition of images in a design easier to do. She also worked as manager of the graphics department at Uniflex Corporation. It was at Uniflex that she was able to learn the art of gravure printing. Gravure printing produces prints by pressing paper against large cylinders that have engraved dot surfaces. “I enjoy technology and hope that I pass on that enthusiasm through teaching at Cal Poly,” Kronenmann says.

Technology has added more than a new genre of art. It has also improved the art of graphic communication. [It] has challenged inks, paper, and resolution to become better. Kronenmann does not feel that technology has changed art but that it has added new venues. It has changed the way people view art and enable individuals to create their own styles. “Technology and home computers have enabled the hobby-artist to become a graphic designer,” says Kronenmann.

She sees both sides of how technology has affected graphic communication. The downside to the technological advances is that people without the traditional art background or any inkling of the general rule of thumb for design are being hired to do the work of a graphic designer. Louis Gerstner, CEO of IBM, said computers are magnificent tools for the realization of our dreams, but no machine can replace the human spark of spirit, compassion, love, and understanding.

On the other hand, technology has increased the speed of communications. Technology has quickened getting to the printing process. Kronemann is able to share and collaborate with other designers at the push of a few buttons.

Even though the technology has advanced the production of art, there is not a question that quality is just as important in computer art as in traditional art. The major difference between the two is the sense of feeling a picture conveys. Hand-painted or drawn art reveals the energy of the artist in the motion of the strokes and/or in the variable depths of the paint strokes left upon the canvas. Computer generated strokes will be flat until we invent a printer that will understand applying thick ink, pastel, or paint with a method that would leave the medium raised.

It is only a matter of time until printers will be able to produce art of the same feeling because technology, as applied to art, is always changing and evolving. Technology has challenged me to keep learning, to keep my mind open and has led me to love the computer. 

*Kimberly Masculine is a junior in Journalism with a concentration in public relations. She hopes to graduate in 2004.*